

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Periodic Electoral Review of Boundaries of County Council Electoral Divisions

Submission by North Yorkshire County Council to the Boundary Committee for England on proposals for the number of County Council Electoral Divisions in North Yorkshire, from 2005, their proposed boundaries and names

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 North Yorkshire is England's largest county stretching from the North Sea coast to within 12 miles of Morecambe Bay, and from south of Selby and the M62 almost 60 miles north to the edge of the Teesside conurbation. It is a County of immense diversity - socially, geographically and economically. It offers a high quality of life to many, whilst being fundamentally a low wage economy with pockets of serious urban disadvantage and extensive, but scattered, rural deprivation.
- 1.2 With a population of some 575,000 across over 3,000 square miles the County is sparsely populated. The population is ageing and almost all the forecast population growth - some 30,000 over the next 15 years - will be amongst the over 50s fuelled almost entirely by immigration. The increase in the over 65s and the over 80s is forecast to be 20% and 18% respectively. Young people under 18 account for 21% of the population.
- 1.3 Most people live in small towns and villages. Only 2% of the County has a population density of more than 4 people per hectare and around 80% is defined as "super sparse" with fewer than 0.5 people per hectare. Most people live in one of the 28 small market towns (only 2 with a population of more than 15,000) and the very many small villages and hamlets. By contrast, around 20% of people live in the two major urban centres - Harrogate and Scarborough.
- 1.4 The County includes two of England's six National Parks – which together account for 37% of the land;
- 1.5 The Council has currently 74 Members, many of whom also serve on the County's 7 District Councils. Although urban divisions are compact, rural ones are extensive - sometimes larger in area (in Richmondshire, for instance) than whole Council areas in other parts of the country. This poses particular challenges for Members who also work with Parish Councils, of which there are over 700 in the County.

2.0 COUNCIL SIZE

- 2.1 Prior to 1996, when the area of North Yorkshire County Council included the area of the City of York Council, there were 96 Members of the County Council. One effect of the creation of the new City of York Council in 1996 was a reduction in the number of County Councillors on North Yorkshire County Council to 74. The boundary of the new City of York authority cut through existing electoral divisions, however, leaving 2 electoral divisions with electorates equivalent to less than 20% of the County's electoral division average and 2 other divisions with electorates of only about 50% of the County average.
- 2.2 In coming to a preliminary view on the appropriate future Council size for North Yorkshire County Council, the Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee, which has

delegated powers to deal with electoral matters, was conscious of the Electoral Commission's guidance which indicated that current County Councils varied from 42 to 84 Councillors, but the Committee also took into account some comparative information about other County Councils, showing the numbers of Members of each Council; the population and area of each of those counties; the population served by each Member, on average; and the area, in hectares, served by each Member, on average. That data is set out below.

COUNTY COUNCILS - 2001					
	Members of The Council	Population	Area in Hectares	Population /Member	Hectare /Member
Bedfordshire	49	367,345	119,220	7497	2433
Buckinghamshire	54	475,686	156,509	8809	2898
Cambridgeshire	59	304,357	537,600	5159	9112
Cheshire	48	672,400	208,344	14008	4341
Cornwall	79	481,500	354,810	6095	4491
Cumbria	83	492,113	681,685	5929	8213
Derbyshire	64	730,200	262,858	11409	4107
Devon	54	692,300	656,000	12820	12148
Dorset	42	381,910	254,181	9093	6052
Durham	61	491,100	223,180	8051	3659
East Sussex	44	488,000	172,530	11091	3921
Essex	79	1,287,800	345,619	16301	4375
Gloucestershire	63	528,370	265,535	8387	4215
Hampshire	73	1,231,500	367,915	16870	5040
Hertfordshire	77	1,024,800	164,306	13309	2134
Kent	84	1,318,000	354,296	15690	4218
Lancashire	78	1,146,400	289,971	14697	3718
Leicestershire	54	597,600	208,380	11067	3859
Lincolnshire	76	619,400	592,000	8150	7789
Norfolk	84	790,300	537,234	9408	6396
Northamptonshire	68	615,800	236,737	9056	3481
Northumberland	66	309,600	502,644	4691	7616
North Yorkshire	74	565,000	803,741	7635	10861
Nottinghamshire	63	744,800	208,519	11822	3310
Oxfordshire	70	610,800	260,595	8726	3723
Shropshire	44	277,416	319,736	6305	7267
Somerset	57	493,000	345,233	8649	6057
Staffordshire	62	810,000	262,355	13065	4232
Suffolk	80	671,100	380,207	8389	4753
Surrey	76	1,057,137	167,011	13910	2198
Warwickshire	62	503,600	198,054	8123	3194
West Sussex	71	751,800	199,025	10589	2803
Wiltshire	47	426,800	348,070	9081	7406
Worcestershire	57	535,700	173,529	9398	3044
TOTAL	2202	22,493,634	11,157,629	343279	173062
AVERAGE	64.76	661577.47	328165.56	10096	5090

The Committee noted that the average population per Member for English counties is over 10,000, whilst the average population per Member of this County Council is only approximately 7,600, and that the average number of Members for an English County Council is 65. The Committee recognised, however, the particular sparsity of North Yorkshire, with the average area covered by an individual County Councillor being over 10,800 hectares, which is more than twice that of the average area covered by an individual Member, averaged over all County Councils. The Committee was also conscious that the Upper Dales electoral division in Richmondshire, which covers 62,700 hectares, is larger than the whole of Selby District, with what is currently a comparatively low electorate. The Committee was very aware of the substantial impact which a significant reduction in the number of County Council electoral divisions would have on the geographical size of those electoral divisions in the most sparsely populated areas of the County, which would inevitably militate against any recognised community of interest between those areas and places a great burden on the local Member, because of the very substantial travelling distances and times.

1.3 The County Council adopted Executive arrangements in July 2001, after operating pilot arrangements since September 2000, and now has significant experience of operating these new structures. The Executive has nine members, all of whom are from the Conservative group, and there are five Overview and Scrutiny Committees which, in total, provide 79 seats for County Councillors (members of the Executive are, of course, debarred from taking seats on Overview and Scrutiny Committees.) This number of seats ensures that every member of the Council who does not serve on the Executive has the opportunity to serve on at least one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Council also has a Planning and Regulation Functions Committee; an Appeals Committee; Standards Committee and a Pension Fund Committee, which provide a further 26 seats, together with a joint authority, with the City of York Council, for the Fire Service on which the County Council has a further 12 seats. The County Council also appoints six County Councillors to each of the two National Park Authorities in the County and seven Councillors to the North Yorkshire Police Authority. The number of seats on Committees and comparable bodies therefore allows almost every member of the Council to serve on two such bodies, as well as every County Councillor serving on the County Area Committee for their area. In addition, the County Council makes appointments to, or nominations to, a very wide range of outside bodies. In general, the local member will be appointed to serve on any outside body specific to a local area, or will be free to nominate a local person for appointment, whilst county wide and national bodies are allocated between political groups. The County Council also has over 1000 LEA school governor appointments to fill and County Councillors generally serve as school governors in their local areas, although the law prevents any person taking up more than two such appointments.

2.4 The County Council recognises that the introduction of an Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees had a significant effect on the roles of County Councillors. However:-

- Crucially, the major community leadership role of elected representatives has not altered;
- County Councillors are developing substantial roles in scrutiny, policy development and Best Value; and
- The County Council has established Area Committees in each of the Districts in the County.

The Committee took the view, therefore, that the overall effect of the introduction of Executive arrangements on Members' workloads did not, of itself, warrant any significant change, either an increase or decrease, in the number of Members of the Council. All Members of the County Council were consulted on this preliminary view and no contrary view was expressed. Subsequently, in consultations with other Councils on detailed proposals for boundaries of new divisions, support has been expressed for maintaining the number of County Council seats in certain Districts.

1.5 Subsequently, the Committee reviewed its interim decision about the size of the Council, in the light of the figures for the 2001 electorate and projected electorates for 2006 supplied by the District Councils, as electoral registration and local planning authorities. The Committee was conscious that one of the effects of the creation of the City of York Unitary Authority was to sever 4 electoral divisions which previously fell outside the City boundary and that 2 of those divisions, in particular, had very small electorates for County electoral divisions. Balancing the issues of:-

- Councillor workload and internal political management arrangements;
- the effects of super-sparsity in some parts of the County ;
- and the need for the community leadership role to continue to be properly fulfilled;

against the recognition that:-

- the average population served by a Member of North Yorkshire County Council is lower than that for English County Councils as a whole;
 - the 2 severed electoral divisions on the boundary of York have electorates of only about 1,000;
 - and considering how the number of electoral divisions proposed would be divided proportionally amongst the 7 District Council areas based on estimates of the 2001 and 2006 electorates;

the Committee determined that the County Council's submission should be based on having 72 electoral divisions for the County Council from May 2005.

1.6 It was recognised that, at any proposed Council size, there was likely to be some unevenness in the distribution of seats between the 7 District areas in the County, but that, with 72 seats proposed, the allocation to Richmondshire District proportionately was not close to a whole number. (See attached appendices A, B and C which set out the proportional split of 40 to 80 seats, based on electorates for 2001, 2006 and a revised 2006 spreadsheet taking into account the higher revised projection for Selby.) The Committee took the view, however, that no other options which would provide for a functional number of seats gave a more even distribution and recognised the particular benefit of 72 seats providing 6 electoral divisions in Richmondshire. This will be beneficial, as it will permit the average electorate in Richmondshire to be below the projected County average, which is helpful in the geographical size of a new Upper Dales electoral division, in this very sparsely populated area of the County. It was also recognised that allocating 72 seats proportionately between the 7 District Council areas in the County provided a reasonable "fit" between the numbers of new County Council seats in each District with the number of new District Council seats, in most Districts.

This was expected to assist, rather than hinder, achieving coterminosity. As the Government has, in the past, indicated that consideration might be given at some stage to increasing frequency of elections on a “part Council” basis, it is considered beneficial that 72 electoral divisions is divisible equally by 2, 3 or 4.

- 1.7 It is not considered that the change to Executive arrangements necessitates either a significant increase, or decrease, in Council size, nor does the Council believe that the modest reduction from 74 seats to 72 seats, which it proposes, will have any significant impact on the internal political management structure of the Council, since it is believed that a Council of this size provides an adequate number of members to carry out both the Executive and Scrutiny functions, as well as other statutory non Executive roles. It is considered that the primary criterion in determining Council size needs to be the major role of elected members in providing community leadership and representation for their electors. In making this assessment, it is believed that a balance needs to be struck between the number of electors being represented; the geographical size of electoral divisions and the effect of the number of Councillors on the operations of the Council. The County Council believes that a substantial increase in the number of Councillors could lead to a diminution of each Councillor’s role in the workings of the County Council, whilst a significant decrease would lead, particularly in certain parts of the County, to Councillors having to represent electors over too large a geographic area.
- 2.8 The Council believes that it has properly balanced the needs of its internal structures and the interests of residents in being adequately represented in coming to its view and, whilst it recognises that the population served by a Member of North Yorkshire County Council, on average, would be lower than the average for all English County Councils, it believes its proposals provide elector/Member ratios which are consistent with, and in some cases significantly higher than, comparable sparsely populated authorities in Northern England.

3.0 ELECTORATE FOR 2001 AND PROJECTED ELECTORATE FOR 2006

- 3.1 Figures for the electorate for 2001 and projected electorates for 2006 are set out, for each District, on a parish/polling district basis, with the County Council’s proposals for new electoral divisions later in this submission. The figures were provided by the Electoral Registration Officers at each of the 7 District Councils in the County and the projections are informed by the views of local Planning Officers about anticipated housing growth. The 2001 actual electorates and 2006 projected electorates were put in the context of actual electorates for 1998 and projected electorates for each District for 2003, submitted to the Local Government Commission for England as part of the recent review of District Council ward boundaries, and were also set against the Office of National Statistics population projections (1996) of projected population over 18 years of age, by District, for 2001 and 2006. These figures are set out in the following table, together with the District Council’s projection for 2006 headed DC’06.

ELECTORATE PROJECTIONS

	LGCE ‘98	DC ‘01	ONS ‘01	LGCE ‘03	DC ‘06	ONS ‘06
	Base (actual)	+3 years (actual)	+ 3 years	+ 5 years	+ 8 years	+ 8 years
Craven	41885	42581	41100	42412	42992	42100
	100%	101.66%	98.13%	101.26%	102.64%	100.51%
Average annual increase		0.55%	-0.62%	0.25%	0.33%	0.06%

Hambleton	66053	67638	68900	68906	70005	71500
	100%	102.40%	104.31%	104.32%	105.98%	108.25%
Average annual increase		0.8%	1.44%	0.86%	0.75%	1.03%

Harrogate	114081	115231	119200	116751	116712	123400
	100%	101.01%	104.49%	102.34%	102.31%	108.17%
Average annual increase		0.34%	1.5%	0.47%	0.29%	1.02%

Richmondshire	32047	32404	37800	35264	35013	38800
	100%	101.11%	117.95%	110.04%	109.26%	121.07%
Average annual increase		0.37%	5.98%	2.01%	1.16%	2.63%

Ryedale	39696	39938	39500	40557	40207	40300
	100%	100.61%	99.51%	102.17%	101.29%	101.52%
Average annual increase		0.20%	-0.16%	0.43%	0.16%	0.19%

Scarborough	86778	86172	87500	88736	89119	89600
	100%	99.30%	100.83%	102.26%	102.70%	103.25%
Average annual increase		-0.23%	0.28%	0.45%	0.34%	0.41%

Selby	59744	60062	57800	63381	65724	59500
	100%	103.66%	99.75%	109.38%	113.43%	102.69%
Average annual increase		1.22%	0.08%	1.88%	1.68%	0.34%

'ONS' = ONS 1996 based projections (by district) 2001 and 2006 figures – all ages total minus
0-4:5-9:10-14 and
60% of 15-19

3.2 In all cases, the projections provided by Electoral Registration Officers at the District Councils were considered to be consistent with these contextual figures and, in particular, with the actual growth of electorate experienced up to 2001. In Richmondshire, the projected annual growth of electorate of 1.16% up to 2006 was higher than the annual growth experienced to 2001 (0.37%) but markedly lower than the other indicators for that district and therefore seemed appropriate. It was also recognised that Richmondshire contains the largest garrison in Europe and it is believed that the relatively recent change to rolling registration might have an effect, in future, on levels of electoral registration in that part of the District.

3.3 The projected electorate for 2006 for Selby District showed markedly higher growth (13.43%) over the actual electoral figures for 1998, adopted by the Local Government Commission for England, than other Districts. The projection of 1.68% annual growth to 2006 was also higher than the 1.22% annual growth to 2001, but not so markedly so. At the request of the County Council, the Electoral Registration Officers at Selby District Council, however, reviewed their 2006 electorate projection, but this review led to the projection for 2006 being revised upwards, from 65,724 to 67,375, based on growth anticipated in the Local Plan. During development of the County Council's proposals, confirmation was received that the Local Plan has been approved, making higher levels of electoral growth in the District more probable, in the County Council's view. Since

that time, however, the closure of Selby Coalfield has been announced, although it is not possible to assess, at this time, what measures may be implemented to mitigate the effects of the coalfield closure or what effect these developments might have on the implementation of the District Plan. The County Council's proposals for 10 new electoral divisions in the Selby District have, therefore, been drawn up taking both projections into account, recognising that the higher levels of growth currently projected may not be achieved by 2006.

4.0 COTERMINOSITY, ELECTORAL EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY IDENTITIES AND INTERESTS

4.1 In its response to the Local Government Commission for England's draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements for District Councils in North Yorkshire, the County Council objected on the grounds that the review of electoral arrangements in each District of the County had been carried out as a self-contained exercise, without regard for its implications for the electoral arrangements for the County Council. It expressed the view that significant benefits would result to local electors from District wards and County divisions having shared boundaries, wherever practicable, as it believed that a high degree of coterminosity is very helpful in securing effective and convenient local government and for the proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities. It suggested that more enduring electoral arrangements might have been achieved if the implications for County electoral divisions had been recognised in the district ward review process, perhaps by allowing District and County reviews to be carried out concurrently.

3.2 The outcome of the reviews of electoral arrangements for the Districts in North Yorkshire was as follows:-

DISTRICT	WARDS	COUNCILLORS
Craven	19	30
Hambleton	30	44
Harrogate	35	54
Richmondshire	26	34
Ryedale	20	30
Scarborough	25	50
Selby	20	41

3.3 In considering its proposals for the size of the future County Council and the allocation of seats between Districts, this Council also took into account the way in which the allocation of new County electoral divisions, on a District by District basis, would interface with the number of new District wards and District Councillors. In some District Council areas high levels of coterminosity are not considered achievable within acceptable levels of electoral equality, because the numbers of seats on the new District Councils are not easily divisible by the number of proposed new County electoral divisions. In other Districts, however, there are greater opportunities to achieve significant levels of coterminosity, subject to issues of community interests and identity.

3.4 Each of the County Council's submissions, on a District by District basis, took full account of the issue of coterminosity within the particular District Council area. The County Council regrets that the former, very high levels of coterminosity between the boundaries of District wards and County electoral divisions cannot be maintained, because of new warding arrangements. For a variety of reasons, it has either not proved possible, or is not considered appropriate, to bring forward proposals which

would satisfy the Boundary Committee for England's expectation that 60-80% of new County electoral divisions would be wholly coterminous with the boundaries of new District wards. Each of the County Council's Area Committees has looked at proposals for new County electoral divisions in considerable detail. Some have been faced with significant difficulties in aggregating new District wards in order to achieve coterminous electoral divisions,

- sometimes because the size of the electorates in the new District wards are not conducive to that end;
- or because the number of wards cannot be appropriately aggregated to create the required number of electoral divisions;
- or because of geographical features or the geographical shape of a resulting aggregation of District wards;
- or because of the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and to respond to the views of consultees.

Whilst recognising the importance which the Boundary Committee for England attaches to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards, the County Council has taken the view that, whilst a very high level of coterminosity is to be valued, because then in almost every case all electors in any one District ward within the County would also be within the same electoral division, once the level of coterminosity has reduced to 60%, its benefits have been substantially eroded, and other criteria such as local interests and identities should be given greater weight.

- 3.5 The County Council, in its submissions, has still tried to maximise coterminosity, wherever that is considered practicable and consistent with local identities and interests, and the Council has accepted, in some circumstances, that this should be at the cost of electoral equality. Some of the proposed new electoral divisions have projected electorates, therefore, above or below the $\pm 10\%$ threshold identified by the Boundary Committee for England and justifications for these are set out in the text accompanying each of the District-based submissions. Members of the Council were conscious of the particular difficulties faced by County Councillors who represent very large rural areas in some parts of the County. No attempt has been made to weight electorates so that they are greater in more densely populated parts of the County, but the difficulties posed by very large rural electoral divisions have been taken into account, as has the recognition by the Electoral Commission, in paragraph 3.37 of its Guidance and Procedural Advice, that very large rural wards may undermine, rather than enhance the effectiveness and convenience of local government. Wherever it has been possible to propose new electoral divisions in sparsely populated areas which have an electorate below the projected County average, this has been seen as a positive benefit.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The development of the County Council's proposals has been co-ordinated by its Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee, but the work of drawing up detailed proposals within each District Council area has been undertaken by the County Council's 7 Area Committees. All the agenda for the meetings of Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee and the 7 Area Committees are public and are placed on the County Council's website. In addition, copies of Area Committee agenda are sent

to all the Parish Councils in the relevant District and to the District Council. Parish Councils are also sent copies of notices of meetings to encourage local people to attend and speak, as Area Committees permit members of the public to contribute to the discussions. All the information about actual and projected electorates; the statutory criteria and rules under which the review is carried out; and options being considered by the Area Committees have , therefore, been made available to all Parish Councils in each relevant District.

- 4.2 Throughout the process, the County Council has received a significant number of submissions from Parish Councils and has sought to respond to those in developing its final submissions. Copies of all comments received during the development of the County Council's proposals are appended to this submission, on a District by District basis.

6.0 THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROPOSALS FOR EACH DISTRICT AREA

5.1 Craven

Attached, as Appendices 1A, 1B and 1C, respectively, are pro forma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been sent separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary.

The District has 24 new District Council wards and 34 new District Council seats. The County Council proposes that 7 County electoral divisions be retained for Craven, which is consistent with the proportional allocation of 72 County Council electoral divisions and provides for minimum change, whilst achieving 100% coterminosity with new District wards and minimising change from current electoral areas. Detailed development of the proposals was carried out by the County Council's Craven Area Committee, which covers the area of Craven District. The Area Committee's membership includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area, together with Members of the District Council and representatives of parish councils and the voluntary sector. The electoral review was considered by the Area Committee at four meetings, all held within the District, on 7 March in Ingleton; on 9 May in Gargrave; on 23 May in Horton-in-Ribblesdale; and on 26 June in Cowling. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and the members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak, if they so wish. During development of the proposals, a consultation exercise was carried out on a different option, which achieved a greater degree of electoral equality but which offered only 29% coterminosity. A number of consultees raised objections to those proposals, however, in particular on grounds of community of interest and community identity, and the County Council's proposals have been modified in recognition of local views.

Particular consideration was given to whether the Embsay with Eastby ward should be aggregated with the Skipton North and Skipton West wards to produce a new electoral division, or with the Gargrave and Malhamdale; Grassington and Upper Wharfedale wards. It was recognised that if electoral inequality were unavoidable, it would be more appropriate for the more densely populated area of Skipton to have an electorate above the County average, rather than the sparsely populated area of Mid Craven. This argument would have supported combining Embsay with Eastby with Skipton wards. The Council recognised, however, that Embsay with Eastby is a distinct community and

is clearly separated from Skipton. The rural nature of the village; its conservation area status and inclusion within the National Park clearly imply compatibility with other communities within the National Park area. In addition, the Embsay with Eastby Parish Council are always included in invitations to meetings with other parishes in Mid Craven and community interests strongly suggest that it should be grouped with more rural parishes. Whilst the resulting electorate would be slightly above the County average, the majority of the area of the proposed division falls within the National Park and growth in population and electorate is likely to be low. Conversely, the electorate for the Skipton West electoral division, comprising the Skipton North and Skipton West District wards, would be below the County average. Although significant increases in population and electorate may be unlikely within the life of the Local Plan, to 2006, it is expected that development proposals in the north west of Skipton are likely to go ahead thereafter, including possible developments along the line of the Skipton Bypass. It appears, therefore, that an increase of 500 electors in Skipton West, in the years following 2006, is not an unreasonable estimate and a projected electorate for 2006 of slightly more than 10% below the County Council average is considered, therefore, to be beneficial in Skipton West. Conversely, because of the National Park status of the Mid-Craven Area, development in the proposed division will be minimal and, although the 2001 electorate would be slightly more than 10% above the County average, population growth elsewhere in the County is expected to reduce the margin above the County average electorate to + 7.3% by 2006.

Although the District Councillor for Barden Fell expressed grave concerns about aggregating Barden Fell ward with Skipton East ward, it is recognised that, in a County such as North Yorkshire with a widely distributed electorate, it may be unavoidable that disparate areas are aggregated to form electoral divisions. The proposed division is, in any case, substantially unchanged from existing arrangements.

6.2 **Hambleton**

Attached, as Appendices 2A, 2B and 2C, respectively, are proforma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with a map the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro-forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been set separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary wards.

The District has 30 new District Council wards with 44 Councillors and the County Council proposes 11 new electoral divisions. Detailed development of the proposals was carried out by the County Council's Committee for Hambleton. The Area Committee's membership includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area, together with Members of the District Council and representatives of Parish Councils. The electoral review was considered by the Area Committee at four meetings, all held within the District, on 25 February in Tollerton; on 7 May and 27 June in Northallerton, and on 27 May in Snape. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and Members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak, if they so wish. Two of the five options which were considered achieved 100% coterminosity, but it was clear that there were particular concerns about how coterminous electoral divisions could appropriately be achieved in the north eastern part of the District (Stokesley/Great Ayton). Members of the Council were also concerned about severing Sowerby from Thirsk, which both fall within the current Thirsk electoral division, solely in order that electoral equality could be achieved and new District ward boundaries followed.

A number of options were considered for the aggregation of district wards in the Northallerton area to create electoral divisions. The Council was aware of the opposition of Brompton Parish Council to any split from the existing aggregation with the Northallerton East Ward, but recognised that the new district council warding arrangements in Northallerton made any continuation of the aggregation of Brompton with the former Northallerton East ward problematic. One option considered did aggregate Brompton with Northallerton North ward and Cowtons ward, but this was achieved by separately aggregating each of the three Northallerton wards and the Romanby ward with other rural wards to make four electoral divisions. Notwithstanding the views of Brompton Parish Council, the County Council did not support that option, whilst Northallerton Town Council expressed a preference for new County electoral boundaries to keep the parish of Northallerton as intact as possible and supported options which severed Brompton parish from Northallerton wards.

The electorates for the new Sowerby ward and Thirsk ward are such that aggregating the two wards would produce an electorate more than 20% above the County average. The County Councillor representing the current Thirsk electoral division, which combines Thirsk and Sowerby, expressed grave concern, however, at options which sought to separate the two parishes into different divisions and both Sowerby Parish Council and Thirsk Town Council have expressed support for options which would allow them to continue within the same electoral division, Sowerby proposing the creation of a two Member electoral division in order to achieve this end. The County Council supports the view that Sowerby and Thirsk should be aggregated within a single County electoral division, as it has been in the past, and believes that appropriate electoral equality can be achieved by severing Carlton Miniott parish from Thirsk parish, believing that these two disparate communities were aggregated in the new district ward, during the review of district wards, in order to achieve appropriate electoral equality. The County Council believes that an aggregation of Sowerby with Thirsk reflects community interests and identities to a far greater extent than the aggregation of Carlton Miniott with Thirsk, although it recognises the effect which such an arrangement has on the level of co-terminosity achieved and that the resulting electorate will exceed the +10% threshold. This Council believes, in this instance, however, that matters of community interest and identity should greatly outweigh issues of co-terminosity, particularly in view of the very great difficulties of achieving substantial levels of co-terminosity in other parts of the County, and that a slight variation above the +10% threshold is justifiable in the proposed Thirsk and Sowerby division, particularly given the relatively small geographic size of the division and relatively dense population. A concomitant effect of the Thirsk electorate being more than 10% above the County average is that the proposed Thorntons division, which largely surrounds the town, would have an electorate 12.3% below the County average in 2001 and 13.2% below the County average in 2006. The Thorntons division is, however, relatively large and sparsely populated and the Council's view is that this level of variation from electoral equality should be acceptable, particularly bearing in mind that a higher achievement of electoral equality could probably only be achieved by transferring parishes from another district ward, thereby reducing levels of co-terminosity further.

Although the creation of 11 new electoral divisions by aggregating new District Council Wards with a total of 44 new District Councillors could be achieved with 100% co-terminosity and acceptable electoral equality, the view was taken that geographical and community interest issues made such a solution inappropriate in the north east of the district. Because the new Great Ayton ward and the new Stokesley ward both return 3 Councillors, 100% co-terminosity would make it necessary to aggregate each of these wards with another ward returning one Councillor. Because the new Rudby Ward

returns 2 councillors, however, the only co-terminous option available would be to aggregate the new Broughton and Greenhow ward with the Great Ayton ward. This may itself be appropriate, but that would then require the new Stokesley ward to be aggregated with the new Swainby ward. Although this satisfies the requirements of achieving electoral equality and co-terminosity, the resulting electoral division would be virtually severed, with the two wards being barely joined by a narrow strip of land. Such an aggregation does not reflect any community of interest or continue any historic grouping of communities, which might have proved appropriate in the past. The Council also recognised the wish of Rudby Parish Council for the Hutton Rudby area to remain connected to the Stokesley area. The Council's proposal achieves that end and aggregates together other parishes in the Stokesley area where there is community of interest and there are historic links. Crathorne Parish Meeting has also expressed a view that Crathorne should remain with Hutton Rudby in the Stokesley area, because of issues relating to Education and Social Services. Whilst that would reflect the existing electoral arrangements in that part of the County, this Council recognised that this would lead to greater distortion of electoral equality, as the proposed North Hambleton electoral division will be 16.2% below the County average in 2001 and 17.1% below the average in 2006 and did not support that suggestion. Again the relative sparsity of population in the division is considered to justify the relatively low electorate, particularly taking into account the expressed wish of Rudby Parish Council to remain linked with the Stokesley area.

It is believed that the proposals put forward by the County Council for the Hambleton Area are consistent with the wishes of most of the parish councils who have expressed a view. Sutton on the Forest Parish Council expressed support for an option which did not find favour with the County Committee for Hambleton, but it is believed that the Council's proposal will have a limited effect on that parish. Sutton on the Forest is on the southern border of the district, in Huby and Sutton ward, and was grouped with neighbouring parishes in all the options considered, including the one now put forward as the County Council's proposal. Thornton-le-Beans Parish Council expressed a preference for an option which would have aggregated that parish with one of the new Northallerton wards, as the Parish Council believes that it looks to Northallerton, rather than Thirsk, as its local town and for social, economic and educational ties. The County Council has, however, taken the view that the 4 Northallerton wards should continue to be aggregated together to form 2 electoral divisions, rather than each being aggregated with other, more rural, parishes, a view supported by Northallerton Town Council.

Although the Council recognises that Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries are not a relevant criterion in the review of County electoral divisions, the Council is conscious that a review of Parliamentary Constituencies in North Yorkshire is ongoing and it has sought to reduce any confusion amongst electors by putting forward a proposal for electoral divisions in Hambleton District which unifies the District, County and Parliamentary electoral boundaries in the north western part of the district.

6.3 Harrogate

Attached, as Appendices 3A, 3B and 3C, respectively, are proforma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro-forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been sent separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary.

The district has 35 new District Council wards returning 54 Councillors. The County Council proposes that there should be 18 new County electoral divisions, replacing the 20 existing divisions, which should allow the aggregation of areas represented by 3 new district Councillors to each new county electoral division. Many of the new district wards are, however, 2 member wards, particularly in the centre of Harrogate town and it has, therefore, been necessary to split new district wards in the County Council's proposals, in order to achieve electoral equality, although this is necessarily at the expense of co-terminosity. Detailed development of the proposals for the Harrogate District was carried out by the County Area Committee for the Harrogate District, the membership of which includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area together with Members of the Borough Council and representatives of parish councils and a range of voluntary bodies and other interested groups. The electoral review was considered by the Area Committee at three meetings, all held within the district, on 28 March and 31 May in Grantley and on 5 July in Ripon. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and Members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak if they so wish.

The splitting of new district wards in order to aggregate one and a half new district wards into each new electoral division within Harrogate town and Ripon has been done using polling district boundaries proposed by Harrogate Borough Council. Although this leads to a projected electorate of +11.6% in Harrogate Harlow, the use of existing polling districts was adopted to minimise voter confusion. Consideration was given to the creation of 2 member electoral divisions in these areas, which would have been created by aggregating together 3 new District Council wards. Such proposals were not generally supported by local members of the County Council, however, or by the Harrogate Borough Council, whose General Purposes Committee recommended to that Council that, in general, "unless there is clear local support for 2 member divisions, the Council favours single member County Council divisions." Nor did Ripon City Council support the creation of a 2 member electoral division covering the area of the three 2 member Ripon District Council wards.

In contrast, however, there was strong support for the creation of a 2 member electoral division to cover the three 2 member District Council wards in Knaresborough. This proposal is supported by the County Council, by the two local County Councillors and by Knaresborough Town Council. They expressed the clear view that Knaresborough is a single, identifiable community and any division, by the continuation of 2 separate voting areas, would be arbitrary and confusing to voters. Knaresborough has a centralised, comparatively unified, urban structure, with the Nidd forming a boundary to the south. Outside the centre there are almost no commercial or other community type hubs, with only two public houses that could be said to be outside the central areas, and there are no clear geographical or other boundaries on which to base any separation into two divisions. In contrast, Ripon is physically divided into separate communities by the River Skell, the River Ure and the Ripon Canal.

The need to split new District Council wards in the centre of Harrogate town and Ripon, (unless significant number of 2 member electoral divisions were formed, for which there appears to be no local support), has inevitably lead to a low level of co-terminosity being achievable in proposals for new electoral divisions in Harrogate district. The south eastern part of the district was affected by the creation of the City of York unitary authority in 1996, as a significant area of land which was formerly part of the district was taken into the new authority. In addition, because of the projected electorate for 2006, the County Council's proposals reduce the number of County Council electoral divisions in Harrogate from 20 to 18. Necessarily, therefore, there must be change in the electoral

divisions within the district but the view was taken that, in order to minimise confusion amongst the electorate, changes to electoral division boundaries should, so far as possible, be minimised. Whilst the Council accepts that confusion amongst electors is likely to be minimised where there are very high levels of co-terminosity between district ward and electoral division boundaries, where high levels of co-terminosity cannot be achieved, elector confusion may then be minimised by limiting the amount of change to long standing electoral division boundaries, so far as that is consistent with achieving electoral equality. The County Council's proposals are formulated on that basis and seek substantially to retain existing electoral divisions, where these are known to have the support of local electors, both within Harrogate town and, in particular, the Haverah electoral division, which contains parishes in lower Nidderdale and lower Wharfedale which have a community of interest, a view that was supported by Kirkby Overblow Parish Council. The Council recognises that the proposed Haverah electoral division has an electorate 15% above the County average in 2001, although this falls to only 12.1% above the County average projected electorate for 2006. The relatively high level of electorate has, however, been mitigated by proposing that Littlethorpe Parish should remain as part of the Masham and Fountains electoral division, which is currently the case, and it is the Council's view that this proposal represents the best achievable compromise between electoral equality, co-terminosity and community identities in this area.

A number of issues were raised by consultees. Boroughbridge Town Council expressed the view that all options for that electoral division covered far too large an area to be represented by a single Councillor, but it is inevitable in a sparsely populated County, such as North Yorkshire, that many County Councillors will have geographically large divisions to represent. The proposed Boroughbridge division is not significantly different in size from the existing Boroughbridge division and is by no means the largest division in North Yorkshire. The size could only be significantly reduced by a very substantial increase in the number of members of North Yorkshire County Council, which has never been supported by the County Council itself. Hewick and Hutton Parish Council has expressed concern that the County Council's proposals for new electoral divisions separate the Copt Hewick and Bridge Hewick villages into one division and Hutton Conyers village into another. This division derives from the recent review of new district wards, which separated these villages at ward level. Whilst it would be possible to include Newby ward and Wath Vale wards in a single electoral division, that would not resolve the Parish Council's difficulty at ward level, and the County Council in any case took the view that the new Boroughbridge electoral division should aggregate together the Boroughbridge, Claro and Newby district wards, thereby placing the town of Boroughbridge at the centre of the division and the community served by the town, rather than on its periphery. It is recognised that the electorate for the proposed Boroughbridge division is 16.5% above the County average for 2001, although this reduces to 13.1% above the County average on the projected electorate for 2006. The County Council has again found itself constrained by the distribution and electorates of the new District Council wards, exacerbated by the fact that Boroughbridge ward abuts the district boundary. If co-terminosity is to be achieved in the creation of a new Boroughbridge electoral division, there were only limited options available to the County Council and an arrangement which placed the town of Boroughbridge at the centre of that division was considered to be the most appropriate.

The Boundary Committee for England will also have received a letter dated 14 May 2002 from Bishop Thornton and Warsill Parish Council proposing that a single, locally based local authority should be created within the parliamentary constituency boundary but, as this raises matters which go beyond scope of the current review, the County Council's proposals could not address this issue.

6.4 Richmondshire

Attached, as Appendices 4A, 4B and 4C, respectively, are proforma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro-forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been sent separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary.

There are 30 new District Council seats and the County Council has developed a proposal for 6 new County electoral divisions, in place of the existing 5 divisions. The Council was particularly aware of the size of the current Upper Dales Electoral Division which already covers an area greater than the whole of Selby District, but has a relatively low electorate – 4,430 in 2001, some 28.2% below the County average. On a proportional allocation of 72 new County Council seats to District Council areas, based on projections of electorate on a district by district basis, the 72nd seat should, mathematically, be allocated to the Richmondshire area. The County Council took the view, very early in developing its proposals, that the additional seat was clearly justified in Richmondshire, in order to help mitigate the effects of super sparsity in the district. Even with the allocation of the sixth seat, the County Council's proposals extend the area of the existing Upper Dales electoral division to cover another 6 parishes, but this would have been further and unacceptably exacerbated if only 5 seats were to be created in Richmondshire.

Detailed development of the County Council's proposals for Richmondshire was carried out by the County Council's Richmondshire Area Committee, which covers the area of that district. The Area Committee's membership includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area, many of whom were also Members of the District Council, representatives of parish councils and of the six Objective 2 areas in the District. The electoral review was considered by the Area Committee at 3 meetings, all held within the district, on 29 April and 7 June in Middleham and on 1 July at Catterick Garrison. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak, if they so wish.

A range of options for the creation of 6 new electoral divisions in Richmondshire was considered, including the possibility of combining each of the new district council wards in Richmond town with surrounding parishes. This option, which was opposed by Richmond Town Council was, however, rejected. An option which provided 100% co-terminosity was also carefully considered, but a strong view was expressed that the new district ward of Penhill had brought together the disparate and geographically separate communities in Bishopdale and Coverdale, solely in order to achieve electoral equality during the recent review of district wards. It was the clear view that it would be inappropriate to reinforce this inappropriate conjunction of communities in the review of county electoral divisions. Bishopdale and Coverdale are separated by a major range of hills and it is a sixteen mile journey by road between the two communities. Because of the topography of the area and the road network, Bishopdale naturally looks to Hawes and Upper Wensleydale for services and its community identity is with that area, whereas Coverdale naturally looks to Leyburn and the Middle Dales. It is also understood that, because of the physical and community separation between the Bishopdale and Coverdale areas, there will be polling stations in Coverdale for the eastern part of the Penhill Ward, but also polling stations in Coverdale for the new Middleham ward. Whilst this is likely to increase voter confusion in respect of District

Council elections, the County Council believes that its decision to respect this historic, physical and community boundary will reduce confusion for electors in County Council elections. The County Council's proposals therefore split the new Penhill district ward, but the proposed boundary between the Middle Dales electoral division and Upper Dales electoral Division have an historic basis, which is well understood and respected in the area. The proposed boundary between the two divisions not only follows the boundary between the existing County electoral divisions, thereby minimising any elector confusion, but also follows the boundary of the former Aysgarth Rural District Council, which would have been drawn up on the basis of community identities and interests, rather than electoral equality. Community identities and interests do not change significantly in such deeply rural areas and it is the view locally that this boundary remains relevant. Indeed, the boundary separating Bishopdale and Coverdale was used, a few years ago, when the Richmondshire District Council created separate parish forum areas within the district and was again adopted for the creation of 6 community investment partnership areas dealing with European funding. This boundary is meaningful on the ground and in terms of community identities and interests.

The current electorate for the proposed Central Richmondshire electoral division is low (-17%) and the current projected electorate for 2006 continues to be low (-16.4%), although this is a relatively densely populated part of the district. Notwithstanding this, the County Council believes that this is an appropriate grouping of communities to form an electoral division, given their community of interest centred on Catterick Garrison. Seeking to bring the projected electorate closer to the County average could only lead to aggregating together disparate communities and reducing levels of co-terminosity. In any case, it is believed that particular circumstances apply to this part of the County. These three parishes house the largest garrison in Europe and it is also an area of significant growth in local planning terms. It is also believed that there is significant under representation of electors in the area, because of the very high levels of transient population associated with its garrison role. Traditionally, many of the military personnel passing through the garrison, although many may stay for significant periods, have not registered to vote locally. It is believed, however, that it is still too early to have seen the possible effect of rolling registration, since this will enable those serving at Catterick Garrison for only a moderate length of time to re-register to vote there, should they so choose. Because of the very high proportion of the population in the area who are connected with the military, even a limited response to rolling registration would make very significant changes to the electorate for the area and it is believed that it is appropriate to recognise this volatility by establishing an electoral division with a relatively low electorate. In any case, even if the electorate does remain relatively low because those entitled to vote choose to remain registered elsewhere, consideration must be given to the population represented, which will be very high, and there must be some recognition of the significant effects on the caseload for the County Councillor for this division in this exceptional area.

The 2001 electorate for the proposed Middle Dales electoral division is 13.5% below the County average. To some extent it is inevitable that electorates for proposed Richmondshire divisions will be low, because of the County Council's decision to propose that a sixth seat be created in the district, bringing the district average below the County average. The proposed Middle Dales electoral division includes Leyburn, however, the electorate for which is projected to increase by some 30% in the period to 2006, so that the projected electorate for the division is then only 6.4% below the County average. The electorate for the proposed Upper Dales electoral division is 22% below the County average in 2001, although the projected electorate for 2006 would mean that it was only 17.5% below the County average. The County Council takes the view that the geographic size of this division and the super sparsity of population over most of its

area fully justifies an electorate well below the average, particularly as the County Council's proposals, in any case, involve extending the boundaries of this division to cover an even wider area, in the interests of achieving better electoral equality. With the exception of the proposed Bishopdale/Coverdale boundary with the Middle Dales division, the boundaries of the Upper Dales division are co-terminous with new district wards and the County Council believes there are more than adequate grounds for treating this division on an exceptional basis.

In the vast majority of cases, the preferences expressed by Parish Councils have been met in the County Council's proposals. In particular, the very strong local support for retaining parishes in Upper Wensleydale and Upper Swaledale in the same electoral division. Although that has led to an increase in the size of that electoral division, the increase has been limited by the creation of a sixth electoral division and the parishes in Swaledale which the County Council proposes should, in future, form part of the Upper Dales electoral division are all in the National Park; are sparsely populated upland areas; and relate in community identity and interest terms to parishes to the west. Although Barton Parish Council and Middleton Tyas Parish Council expressed a preference for options which linked their parishes with wards to the south, rather than the west, Middleton Tyas Parish Council considered the proposals now put forward by the County Council as a second preference. The views expressed by Harmby Parish Council appear to relate back to the review of district ward boundaries and the County Council's proposals keep Harmby and Spennithorne together in the Middle Dales electoral division.

6.5 **Ryedale**

Attached, as Appendices 5A, 5B and 5C, respectively, are proforma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro-forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been sent separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary.

There are currently 7 electoral divisions in Ryedale District but the creation of the City of York Council in 1996 meant that a significant part of Huntington North Electoral Division became part of that new Council's area. The County Council's proposals therefore reduce the number of County Council electoral divisions in Ryedale from 7 to 6. Ryedale District Council has 30 new District Councillors, following the review of the District arrangements, in 20 new wards.

Detailed development of the proposals was carried out by the County Council's Ryedale Area Committee, which covers the area of the district and this includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area, together with representatives of the District Council and Parish Councils in the area. The electoral review was considered at three meetings, all held within the district, on 3 April in Sand Hutton; on 2 May in Norton; and on 26 June in Sherburn. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak, if they so wish.

So far as is practicable, the County Council's proposals seek to follow new District Ward boundaries, whilst minimising change from the existing pattern of electoral divisions, so as to reduce confusion amongst the electorate. Because the new Derwent Ward is a two Member ward, however, it has been necessary to split that ward between the

proposed Hovingham and Sheriff Hutton electoral division and the proposed Norton electoral division. The names of existing electoral divisions have been retained, with the exception of renaming the current Rillington division as Thornton Dale and the Wolds, which is believed to describe the area covered by that division more accurately. Only the proposed Norton electoral division has an electorate which exceeds the average County electorate for 2001 by more than 10%, although only marginally so. The projected electorate for 2006 for this division is, however, less than 10% above the County average.

Many of the responses to the consultation exercise raised issues which relate back to the review of District Council wards carried out in 1998/99. The County Council's proposals seek, so far as possible, to aggregate together new district wards, but consultees suggested that Edstone and Sinnington more properly belonged in different wards, which would then have meant that they also fell into different electoral divisions. Whilst there was sympathy for this point of view, it was recognised that transfers of parishes between electoral divisions would inevitably reduce the level of co-terminosity achieved and the County Council's proposals did not seek to satisfy those requests because of the impact on co-terminosity. Similarly Malton Town Council did not support the County Council's proposals as "villages suggested for inclusion within the division have no historical allegiances to the town of Malton. Indeed their historical connections are based on Helmsley." Many of the parishes included in the County Council's proposals for the Malton electoral division are part of the current division, but it is recognised that some, including Edstone and Nunnington and parishes to the west have not previously been part of Malton Division, but the proposals seek to follow new ward boundaries in this area. Rosedale Parish Council objected strongly to the proposal that it be included in the Kirkbymoorside electoral division, rather than the Pickering electoral division, as connections for services and in community interest terms all are with Pickering. Similarly, the County Council recognise that, whilst such an adjustment in the boundary would be acceptable in terms of electoral equality and would better reflect community interest, it would further reduce the level of co-terminosity achieved.

In addition, Westow Parish Council argued strongly to remain with its traditional "partner" parishes, to the east of the River Derwent, because of educational and religious links and the County Councillor for the Norton division has also supported that view. Although Westow has not been included in the proposed Norton division in the County Council's submission because of pressures to achieve electoral equality, I believe that there was considerable sympathy for the Parish Council's point of view, which was also supported by the neighbouring Parish Council of Burythorpe.

6.6 Scarborough

Attached, as Appendices 6A, 6B and 6C, respectively, are proforma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro-forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been sent separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary.

The district has 25 new District Council Wards with 50 Councillors and the County Council proposes 14 new electoral divisions, in place of the current 15 divisions. Because of the number and electorate levels in the new district wards, it has been difficult to develop proposals which achieve a substantial level of co-terminosity within Scarborough District. Detailed development of the proposals was carried out by the

County Council's Yorkshire Coast and Moors Area Committee, which covers the area of Scarborough District. The Area Committee's membership includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area, together with Members of the Borough Council and representatives of parish councils. The electoral review was considered by the Area Committee at 3 meetings, all held within the District, on 11 April in Whitby; on 22 May in Scarborough and on 4 July in Danby. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and Members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak, if they so wish.

An early option for the creation of 14 new County electoral divisions considered by the Area Committee sought to create one division which stretched from the north of Scarborough Town to Eskdaleside and which combined Hawsker-cum-Stainsacre with Streonshalh. There was, however, very strong local objection to these suggestions, including the strongly made argument that the southern boundary of Fylingdales forms a natural "watershed" between those communities which look north to Whitby and those which look south to Scarborough and that this "watershed" should be respected in the development of new electoral divisions for the district. In addition, strong objections were lodged to the proposal, in that early option, to combine Eastfield with the Crossgates polling district in Seamer and to aggregate the new Derwent Valley Ward with the Seamer Ward (less Crossgates), with particular objection being raised in respect of the parishes of Snainton, Brompton and Wykeham.

Danby Parish Council had supported the original proposal for its area, which would have combined the new District Wards of Danby, Mulgrave and the western part of Esk Valley. In response to strong local views, however, the County Council developed revised proposals which observe the "Fylingdales watershed", although it was recognised that this division within the District means that the three electoral divisions to be created in the northern part of the District inevitably have a relatively high electorate, although two of them will be areas of relatively sparse population. The County Council proposes that one division should be created by aggregating the new district wards of Danby, Esk Valley and Fylingdales, leaving two further divisions to be created by aggregating the district wards of Mayfield, Mulgrave, Streonshalh and Whitby West Cliff.

Arguments were put forward for combining Streonshalh with either Mayfield or Whitby West Cliff and for combining Mulgrave with either Mayfield or Whitby West Cliff. Ultimately the County Council is not in a position to express a final preference. The argument for combining Mulgrave with Whitby West Cliff is based on the fact that Whitby West Cliff continues the coast line up until the Esk River and therefore has more in common with the other coastal communities in Mulgrave, including involvements in the fishing industry and in coastal defences. Responses to the consultation exercise indicated that Hinderwell Parish Council, Lythe Parish Council and Mickleby Group Parish Council all objected to the aggregation of Mayfield Ward with Mulgrave Ward, on the basis that these are very different communities. It is, however, inevitable in a County such as North Yorkshire that in developing electoral divisions with electorates of 6,000 to 7,000, there will be some aggregation of disparate communities. The arguments put forward for combining Streonshalh with Whitby West Cliff include the fact that a significant proportion of the newly created Whitby West Cliff Ward was formerly part of both the former Streonshalh district ward and the Streonshalh electoral division (although part was included in Mayfield division) and that the electors of Streonshalh have nothing in common with Mayfield. Although the coastline may continue in West Cliff, it is argued that the electors of West Cliff Ward do not regard themselves as part of a coastal community, but as part of the town of Whitby, together with Streonshalh.

The Esk Valley electoral division proposed by the County Council has a 2001 electorate 18.9% higher than the County average and 2006 electorate 18.7% above the County average. The electorate for an electoral division based on combining Mayfield and Streonshalh wards would be 19.4% above the 2001 County average and 19.3% above the 2006 County average, with the electorate for an electoral division based on the Mulgrave and Whitby West Cliff wards being less than 10% above the County average in 2001 and 2006. The alternative configuration for two divisions based on the Mulgrave ward and the three "Whitby" wards would create a Mayfield/Mulgrave electoral division with the 2001 electorate 9.3% above the County average and the 2006 electorate 9.2% above the County average, whilst an electoral division based on the Streonshalh and Whitby West Cliff wards would have a 2001 electorate 18.3% above the County average and a 2006 electorate 18.2% above the County average. Members of the County Council were generally concerned about the high electorates in these relatively sparsely populated parts of the County, but took the view that no better options were available if co-terminosity was to be achieved and if the "Fylingdales watershed" was to be respected, which had very substantial local support.

In response to objections from consultees, the County Council did not pursue the early proposal of aggregating Eastfield with the Crossgate polling district of Seamer, but instead proposes aggregating Eastfield with Osgodby parish with which it is closely associated. Whilst the 2001 and 2006 projected electorates for Eastfield/Osgodby are relatively low (at about minus 17%) this is an area of high and rapid development and local housing plan allocations indicate a likely future growth of electorate to more than 7,000. In the circumstances, it is the Council's view that a relatively low electorate for 2006 for Eastfield/Osgodby is not only justifiable, but is likely to be beneficial given the high degree of certainty of very substantial and rapid housing growth in this area of the County.

The current electoral division of Filey also includes Primrose Valley and its inclusion in the new Filey electoral division would have assisted in achieving a better level of electoral equality, as the 2001 and 2006 electorates are more than 12% below the County average. The Council is conscious, however, of the Boundary Committee's desire to achieve significant levels of co-terminosity and has not, therefore, included Primrose Valley in the Filey electoral division in its proposals. Similarly the County Council's proposals for the Newby electoral division are more than 14% below the County average for 2001 and 2006, but the Council sought to achieve co-terminosity where practicable. Having adopted the "Fylingdales watershed", the existing Scalby Division is largely unchanged, and there was strong local support for its continuation. The electorates of the new District Wards within Scarborough Town did not, in most cases, lend themselves to simple aggregation of wards to form new electoral divisions, though this has been adopted where practicable. The County Council's proposals do, however, use existing polling districts developed by Scarborough Borough Council in order to minimise elector confusion in respect of polling stations.

6.7 **Selby**

Attached, as Appendices 7A, 7B and 7C, respectively, are proforma 6 setting out the County Council's proposals, together with the District Council's figures for 2001 electorate and projected 2006 electorate and pro-forma 5, setting out the new District warding arrangements. Maps showing the boundaries and names of parishes, new district and proposed new electoral divisions have been sent separately. New ward boundaries are shown in orange and new electoral division boundaries in purple and these are overlain where there is a common boundary.

Selby District Council has 41 Councillors under its new ward arrangements representing 20 wards and the County Council has proposals for the creation of 10 new County electoral divisions. The new District wards are, however, a mixture of single Member, 2-Member and 3-Member wards and it has proved very difficult to develop options which offer high degrees of electoral equality and coterminosity, particularly as there are concentrations of high electorate, and high expected growth in electorate, in particular parts of the District, often where multi-Member district wards adjoin each other. In addition, in some parts of the District, physical constraints such as rivers intervene.

Detailed development of the proposals for the Selby District was carried out by the Selby Area Committee, the membership of which includes all Members of the County Council representing electoral divisions in that area, together with representatives of the District Council and Parish Councils in the area. The electoral review was considered by the Area Committee at three meetings, all held within the District, on 10 April in Selby, on 23 May in Tadcaster and on 25 June in Riccall. All meetings of the County Council's Area Committees are held in public and Members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak if they so wish.

Having considered a range of options the County Council's proposal achieves coterminosity of only 10% and has three proposed electoral divisions which exceed 2006 County average by more than 10% and two proposed electoral divisions which, on the revised projected electorate for 2006, are more than 20% above the County average. Members believed, however, that this option offered the best expression of community identities and interests, however, and, in particular, kept together Sherburn in Elmet and South Milford and retained the existing grouping of parishes in Osgoldcross, which has strong local support.

Whilst it is recognised that a few of the proposed electoral divisions show a high degree of variation from electoral equality, the majority are relatively neutral. As indicated in the paragraph above, the concentrations of population in certain parts of the district, combined with the adoption of multi-member district wards and hotspots of anticipated population growth all militate against the development of options which achieve high levels of electoral equality for all divisions and the County Council believes that its proposals represent the best compromise between electoral equality and community identities in the district.

As indicated in Section 3 of this submission, the electorate levels projected for 2006 are considered to be particularly volatile in the Selby District. The 2006 revised figures which are quoted are based on growth anticipated in the Local Plan and confirmation was received, during the period of developing these proposals, that the Local Plan had been approved, making higher levels of electorate growth in the district more probable, in the County Council's view. It may be, however, that the 2006 revised projection has assumed a higher proportion of electors per household than may arise in practice and the news has also been received, since that time, that the Selby coalfield is to close. Whilst that closure may have a negative effect on population and electorate growth in the district, conversely any mitigation measures which may be put in place could lead to increases. In either event, it is likely that changes will be localised in particular parts of the district. In the circumstances, the County Council has taken the view that it should take both projections into account in drawing up its proposals and, exceptionally for Selby District, that it may be prudent to give greater weight to the 2001 electorate, rather than possibly highly volatile projections.

Of the written responses to the consultation procedure, Burton Salmon Parish Council expressed opposition to aggregation with Fairburn Parish, as it had during the review of

district council wards, and supported being grouped with Monk Fryston and Hillam. This is achieved by the proposals put forward by the County Council, which were also believed to meet the aspirations of Camblesforth Parish Council. Drax Parish Council, Saxton-cum-Scarthingwell with Lead Parish Council, Tadcaster Town Council and Temple Hirst Parish Council also expressed support for the County Council's proposal. Barlby and Osgodby Parish Council and Cliffe Parish Council, however, expressed a preference for an option which would have aggregated the Barlby and Cliffe district wards in a single electoral division and South Milford Parish Council supported an option which would have aggregated that parish with parishes to the south, rather than with Sherburn in Elmet. Selby Town Council sought the creation of a two Member electoral division for the Selby Town area, although, to achieve electoral equality, it would probably also have been necessary to include Brayton ward in such a division. There was, however, no other expression of support for the creation of a two Member division in the Selby district.

7.0 Conclusion

The County Council would wish to acknowledge the help and support it has received from the district councils in the County in this review of electoral division boundaries, particularly in respect of the preparation of electorate figures and polling district information. The County Council has sought to consult widely with parish councils and other interest groups in developing its proposals and, whilst it regrets that the outcome of the review of district ward arrangements has meant that high levels of co-terminosity cannot be achieved in some districts within the County, the Council believes that the proposals it has put forward represent the best balance between electoral equality, co-terminosity and community interests which can be achieved.

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16 August, 2002